

Following his retirement from the Air Force in January 1994, Colonel Strobebridge joined the Retired Officers Association of America and served as Deputy Director and since 2001 he has served as Director of Government Relations for the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA.

Under Colonel Strobebridge's professional stewardship, MOAA has played a vital role as a principal advocate of legislative initiatives to improve readiness and the quality of life for all members of the uniformed service community—active, reserve, and retired, as well as their families.

Defense News noted recently that “no major [military] personnel-related legislation has been enacted since 1994 without Colonel Strobebridge's imprint.”

Colonel Strobebridge has worked closely with, and has been a valuable resource for, the U.S. Senate and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular as we enacted a wide range of benefit improvements for our military personnel. He provided input or support for legislative proposals on a wide range of issues, including TRICARE for Life; the elimination of VA disability pay offsets to military retired pay for many retirees; restoration of full cost of living adjustments to retired pay; elimination of the offset to survivor annuities by Social Security payments; TRICARE benefits for reserve families; and many other initiatives that have been invaluable in improving the long-term retention in our Armed Forces.

Colonel Strobebridge's long and distinguished career of leadership and personal dedication to fostering readiness by protecting every servicemember's welfare is an inspiration and a continuing lesson to all who care about the men and women of our military. My best wishes go with him and his family.

Colonel Strobebridge, on the occasion of your retirement as Director of Government Relations for the Military Officers Association of America, I salute you on behalf of all the men and women, past and present, who wear the uniform.

THANKING STAFF

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, on Saturday, March 23, 2013, the Senate passed the budget, S. Con. Res. 8. In my statement, I thanked a few members of my staff and I would like to acknowledge the rest of my dedicated staff who worked tirelessly to pass the Senate budget:

Jeannie Biniek, Sarah Bolton, Michael Branson, Alex Brosseau, Dave Brown, Paula Burg, Josh Caplan, Stephanie Cherkezian, Ally Coll, Brendon Dorgan, Amy Edwards, Robert Etter, Jennifer Hanson, Helen Hare, Robyn Hiestand, Mike Jones, Amaia Kirtland, Tyler Kruzich, Zach Moller, Michael Oleyar, Farouk Ophaso, Jason Park, Miles Patrie, Ryan Pettit, John Righter, Josh Ryan, Evan Schatz, Brian Scholl, Emily Sharp, Eli Zupnick.

Steven Bergsbaken, Shawn Bills, Scott Cheney, Beth Chrusciel, Sean Coit, Jake

Cornett, Carole Cory, Katherine Dapper, Ariel Evans, John Fogarty, Megan Foster, Emma Fulkerson, Adam Goodwin, Dabney Hegg, Alex Keenan, Zach Mallove, Matt McAlvanah, Megahan McCarthy, Ben Merkel, Rachel Milberg, Silke Mounts, James O'Brien, Molly O'Rourke, Lauren Overman, David Prestwood, Stacy Rich, Kathryn Robertson, Meghan Roh, Alexa Seidl, Mike Spahn, Anna Sperling, Michael Waske.

POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT IN UKRAINE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President. I would like to address the current situation in Ukraine, an important country in the heart of Europe, a bellweather for democratic development in the region, and the current Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

Let me first welcome the release from prison Sunday of former Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs and leading opposition figure Yuri Lutsenko. Mr. Lutsenko had been convicted on politically motivated charges and incarcerated since December 2010. President Yanukovich's pardon of Mr. Lutsenko is an encouraging step in the right direction. I also welcome the pardon of former Environment Minister Heorhiy Filipchuk, who also served as a member of Ms. Tymoshenko's Cabinet and had been released last year after his sentence was suspended. By pardoning Mr. Lutsenko and Mr. Filipchuk, President Yanukovich is indicating not only a willingness to resolve what has been a major irritant in Ukraine's relations with the United States and the EU, but also a stain on Ukraine's democratic credentials.

At the same time, I remain deeply concerned about the politically motivated imprisonment of Ukrainian opposition figure and former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who has been incarcerated since August 2011.

Mrs. Tymoshenko's case stands out as a significant illustration of Ukraine's backsliding with respect to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law since she was defeated by President Yanukovich in February 2010. The United States, EU, and Canada have repeatedly expressed concerns about the application of selective justice against political opponents, their flawed trials, conditions of detention, and the denial of their ability to participate in last October's parliamentary elections.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, which has long been committed to Ukraine's independence and democratic development, I am especially mindful of Ukraine's 2013 OSCE chairmanship. Like any Chair-in-Office, Ukraine faces formidable tasks in leading a multilateral organization that operates on the basis of consensus, which includes 57 countries ranging from mature democracies to oppressive dictatorships. The United States wants Ukraine to succeed, but the reality is that the politically motivated imprisonment of Ms. Tymoshenko casts a cloud over its chairmanship. A Chair-

in-Office must itself have strong democratic credentials if it is to succeed in encouraging reform in other countries.

Furthermore, democratic regression in Ukraine has harmed U.S.-Ukrainian bilateral relations, preventing a traditionally strong partnership from realizing its full potential. It has also slowed down the process of Ukraine's drawing closer to the EU, which is that country's stated foreign policy priority, manifested in the still-delayed signing of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. More than half a year has gone by since the unanimous adoption of S. Res. 466, calling for the release of Yulia Tymoshenko.

The Ukrainian authorities now need to follow up on the important step they have taken in freeing Yuri Lutsenko. They need to free Ms. Tymoshenko and restore her civil and political rights. By demonstrating commitment to the rule of law and human rights principles embodied by the OSCE, Ukraine will strengthen the credibility of its chairmanship and show it is serious about being a full-fledged member of the democratic community of nations.

I strongly urge the Ukrainian government to resolve the case of Ms. Tymoshenko.

HONOR FLIGHT 2013

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, in April, the participants in the 2013 Honor Flight will be traveling to Washington, DC, to visit memorials of World War II, Vietnam war and the Korean war, as well as the Lincoln Memorial on The National Mall.

I would like to record the names of the World War II veterans selected for this trip: Ms. Hallie Odessa Dixon from Anchorage, who served in the Navy as a telegrapher 2nd Class and also worked as a cryptographic aide. Mr. Chelton S. Feeny from Anchorage, who served in the Army as a private first class, participated in the Army Specialized Training Program at Princeton University, and also worked as a medic on hospital trains. Mr. Dietrich L. Strohmaier from Fairbanks, who served in the Army as a private first class, 25th Division, 35th Regiment and also served briefly in Hollandia, New Guinea, and the Philippines as part of a seven-man recon squad, and later in Japan as part of the Occupation Forces. Mr. Dale Joseph Trombley from Soldotna, who served in the Army Air Corps as a major and B-17 pilot in the 452nd Bomb Group, 730th Air Mobility Squadron, and Mr. John Walker from Soldotna who served in the Army as a sergeant, 2nd Division and 1st Army at Omaha Beach, Belgium and in Germany.

I would also like to make special mention of a Korean war veteran, Mr. William Ladd McBride, from Fairbanks, who has been selected for the trip as well. His vision is failing and it is his fervent wish to see 'his' memorial while he still can with his own eyes. Mr. McBride joined the Army in